

**Fourth Judicial District
Family Violence Coordinating Council
Serving Hennepin County**

Present: Shereen Askalani, Joan Blace, Lila Bolke, Katie Brey, Dr. Deborah Eckberg, Tara Ferguson Lopez, Elizabeth Hogan, Amirithini Keefe, Holly Knight, Jacob Kraus, Melynda Nelson, John Phung, Jessica Rahier, Rachel Ratner, Jennifer Saunders, Brittany Siedel, Grace Spearman, Elsa Swenson, Anna VonRueden, Michael Weinstein

1. Welcome

Committee Chair Judge Shereen Askalani welcomed the group.

2. Approve June Minutes

Minutes approved as submitted.

3. Civil Committee OFP Workgroup – Workgroup Co-Chairs Referee Holly Knight, Elsa Swenson & Jessica Rahier

The first meeting of the OFP Workgroup was in April and the group has met monthly since then. The group consists of domestic violence advocates, court administration, judicial officers, prosecutors, and law enforcement – individuals who are all involved with the Order for Protection (OFP) process from beginning to end. The group's focus is to increase the efficiency of the OFP process for all involved and to identify and address systemic issues and gaps.

The workgroup is focusing on the following major issues:

- With the existence of remote hearings, there is no longer the ability to personally serve documents in the courtroom, causing issues with enforcement. Changes are being implemented to handle this differently on the record, and the workgroup is advocating to add language to the orders that will provide additional filing tools.
- The workgroup is also partnering with state court to improve accessibility of Guide and File forms for self-represented litigants who may not be working with the Domestic Abuse Service Center or an advocate.
- Law enforcement, particularly in the last year and half, have exhibited hesitation to retrieve children, and many of the ex parte Orders for Protection are either on behalf of children or include custody orders (or a lack of), which requires a child to be with a certain parent. The workgroup partnered with law enforcement to change the ex parte language to include more severe wording that failure to retrieve children may result in felony deprivation of parental rights.

The workgroup is also tackling minor issues, many of which are procedural, such as service-related issues and challenges providing exhibits in a remote hearing environment.

The workgroup meets monthly and their next meeting is October 21st.

4. FVCC Resource Fair Update – Jacob Kraus, FVCC Juvenile Committee Chair

Jacob Kraus reported that the FVCC Resource Fair will take place virtually with a tentative date of October 13th. The planning committee welcomes suggestions and input; feedback may be sent to Jacob.

5. Committee Reports – Chairs

- a. **Juvenile Committee:** On behalf of co-chair Lisa McNaughton, Jacob Kraus reported an update from the committee's last meeting in July, in which members discussed agency return-to-work plans post-Labor Day and gave an update on the FVCC Resource Fair. The committee meets again next week.
- b. **Criminal Committee:** Jennifer Saunders reported that the Criminal Committee met on Monday, August 16th and discussed training opportunities, including a September 23rd training on the application of firearms laws in domestic violence cases. The committee continues to work on the nuts and bolts of its presentation for the FVCC Resource Fair, but the theme will center around system changes for victims and petitioners resulting from COVID. In November, Carolyn Peterson from the Hennepin County Attorney's Office will present on mental health issues and the gap in services for individuals who are deemed incompetent but do not meet the level for commitment. The committee meets next on October 18th.
- c. **Civil Committee:** Michael Weinstein reported that the Civil Committee met on July 22nd. He reported meetings have been well attended and there is overlap in membership between the Civil Committee and the OFP Workgroup, which has been a good conduit for information-sharing. The committee meets again later this month.
- d. **Advocate Committee:** Rachel Ratner reported that the committee met a few weeks ago and updates were given from the latest OFP Workgroup meeting. The committee continues its efforts to develop training opportunities and identified areas advocates feel they need additional training or areas they are able to train others.

6. Agency Updates – What's Changed Since June – All

The following agency updates were shared:

- Tara Ferguson Lopez shared that Rachel Kraker was promoted to a Senior Attorney in the Hennepin County Attorney's Office. She is now the Senior Attorney in charge of domestic violence cases for the Adult Prosecution Unit, supervising all felony domestic violence cases.
- Amirthini Keefe reported that DAP hired a new Director of Client Services who will begin on Monday. DAP recently started a Juvenile Transitional Age Youth Group through a partnership with Juvenile Probation, which will run through the end of the calendar year. DAP also recently received a grant from Hennepin County to start BIPOC programming for individuals who have experienced violence. In September the organization will begin a two-year research project with the University of Minnesota to study its intervention prevention program.

7. Open Forum/Announcements – All

- Chair Judge Askalani notified attendees that FVCC meetings will be held remotely for the remainder of 2021, and later this year will reevaluate whether to conduct meetings virtually, hybrid, or in person in 2022.
- The Executive Committee will meet on November 4th instead of November 11th to accommodate the Veteran's Day holiday.
- Today is FVCC Executive Director Katie Brey's final meeting; condolences and well wishes were shared as she enters retirement later this month.

Meeting adjourned at 12:53 p.m.

Future Meetings and Presentations

October 14 – FVCC Meeting

November 4 – FVCC Meeting

Use this link to find us on the web:

[http://www.mncourts.gov/Find-Courts/Hennepin/Family-Violence-Coordinating-Council-\(FVCC\).aspx](http://www.mncourts.gov/Find-Courts/Hennepin/Family-Violence-Coordinating-Council-(FVCC).aspx)

Use this link to access our Google Calendar of events:

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=fvcccalendar@gmail.com&ctz=America/Chicago>